1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

Ethnology of Easter Island

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INTRODUCTION

Most of the material published in this monograph is the result of field work that I carried out as a member of the Franco-Belgian Expedition to Easter Island (1934-1935). First plans for this Expedition were conceived by the Institut d'Ethnologie de l'Université de Paris and by the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle in Paris. The Belgian Government and scientific institutions gave their support to this enterprise which became a joint undertaking by the two countries. The Expedition was originally composed of Mr. Charles-Louis Watelin, French archaeologist, Dr. Henri Lavachery, Conservatuer aux Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire, Dr. Israel Drapkin, Chilean physician, and me. Mr. Watelin died at sea in the Patagonian channels on the way to Easter Island.

The French Navy transported the members of the Expedition to Easter Island aboard the man-of-war *Rigault-de-Genouilly* which was then making a cruise from France to Indo-China. We returned to France aboard the Belgian training ship *Mercator*. The writing of this volume was made possible through a Bishop Museum Fellowship that enabled me to come to Honolulu and to work up my material at Bishop Museum.

Conditions for anthropological research on Easter Island are especially distressing. I know of few places in the Pacific where so little remains of the ancient culture. The rare traditions that linger in the memory of a small group of natives have been recorded over and over again by visitors to the island. The present population of 456 natives is entirely derived from the 111 natives left after the abandonment of the island by the French missionaries in 1872. This single fact shows how little chance exists for the preservation of old traditions. Viriamo, the mother of my informant Tepano, is the only living person who witnessed the functioning of the ancient culture. As she is over 100 years old and her memory is uncertain, she was of little help in my inquiries.

My chief informant was Juan Tepano who, although about 60 years of age, is the oldest man on the island. He speaks fluent Spanish, having spent seven years in Chile. He was Mrs. Routledge's interpreter and has retained from that contact a keen interest in the past. He is intelligent, quick, and proud of his reputation as the *maori* in the old folklore. When other natives are asked about their ancestors they always refer to Juan Tepano. The information that I received from others was generally attributed to him. If Tepano reads these

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[p. 1 & 2 have no textual material]

4:Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945
OY2 Easter Island OY2

had fallen, again emphasized their enigmatic relation to the lost civilization, of which the statues and great stone mausoleums as well as other finely wrought remains of the past were mute evidence. 175

Then scientists began to study Easter Island. At what time and by what manner of men, they asked, were these images made, with their colossal bulk, their empty eyes and scornful expressions? Was the island the remnant of a sunken continent? Had it been inhabited by a powerful earlier race which had died out, or been destroyed and displaced by more warlike conquerors? Had eruptions of the volcanoes exterminated the skilled craftsmen, the sculptors, and the architects, leaving only a small group of people too discouraged and weak to continue the work of their forefathers? These are among the questions that still puzzle students. 000

The statues symbolize the mystery of the island and have made it famous. Yet their paradoxical presence on this speck of land in the midst of the Pacific is perhaps less difficult to understand than are the wooden tablets covered with small incised designs that were collected from the natives in the second half of the last century. The tablets raised the fascinating question whether their makers used on them a kind of hieroglyphic script which might some day be deciphered and would unveil the secret of its past. But all attempts to decipher them, with the help of intelligent natives, failed. 212 114 121

A few years ago the study of the tablets took an unexpected turn. A Hungarian linguist, Guillaume de Hevesy, published a long list of Easter Island hieroglyphs which, it was claimed, presented very striking analogies with the symbols of a newly discovered script found in the ruins of a civilization, 5,000 years old, in the Indus Valley at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. There, coetaneous with the Sumerian civilization, flourished large and opulent cities inhabited by people whose name and affiliations are totally unknown to us. They were wiped out probably at the time of the Aryan, and their existence remained unsuspected until the great excavations of Sir John Marshall. The Mohenjo-daro people have left a great many inscriptions on seals which have so far resisted any attempt at decipherment. If it could be shown that the two scripts were related, new light might be thrown on the obscure past of the whole Pacific area.

The problem thus posed was of such significance for an understanding of the early history of man that the French Government in association with the Belgian Government decided to organize an expedition to Easter Island to try to read its riddle. The leader of the expedition was a French archeologist, Charles Watelin, who, unfortunately, died in Tierra del Fuego. I was then asked to carry on the research, in association with the Belgian archeologist, Dr. Henry Lavachery. 121 122

7: Anonymous T-5 (1770)1908
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

NARRATIVE

of the Expedition undertaken from the Port of The Callao to the ISLAND OF DAVID by order of His Excellency Señor Don Manuel de Amat, Viceroy of Peru *etc.*, who for that purpose gave instructions to prepare H.M. ship of the line *San Lorenzo*, under the command of Commodore Don Felipe Gonzalez, and the frigate *Santa Rosalia*, under Captain Don Antonio Domonte, which sailed on the 10th of October, 1770, taking for their point of departure lat. 12° S., and long. 298° 30′ from the meridian of Tenerife.

On the 24th of the said month we found ourselves in lat. 27° and long. 283° 31′: we had the wind aft and were heading W., corrected, in accordance with the orders and instructions which our Commodore held, by which he was also to lie to every night so soon as we should arrive at the meridian beyond which he had not passed in his many other voyages.

On the 10th of November, at 6 o'clock in the morning, we saw for the first time some five or so birds known as black petrels[1]; and at that hour we were in lat. 27° and long. 268° 20′. Later on we saw three of the birds they

[1] The term here used is *pardelas prietas*. Caballero, in his *Diccionario de la Lengua Castellana* (Bibliog. no. 12), defines *pardela* as a South American bird something larger than a dove, or pigeon, which flies to a great distance from land, and soars high. Lorenzo and his collaborateurs in the *Diccionario Marítimo Español* (Bibliog. no. 33) have adopted the same description. Experience and other references (among whom Frézier, who calls them in French *damiers* and mentions their black and white plumage and pigeon-like flight) point to the probability of the sooty petrel or the Cape pigeon, being here meant; and the voyagers would be likely to begin to meet with either of these birds about the latitude mentioned when sailing southwards.

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10: Cooke D-5 (1886) 1899
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

In traveling southward, along the slope of the mountain, on again approaching the region of grass it was singular to observe the line of demarcation. The sand, moved by the winds, was gradually encroaching upon the vegetation, the depth of the edge being about 6 inches. The contrast between the deep red of the one and the vivid green of the other was very striking, and the line was as straight, regular, and clearly drawn, with fertility on one side and barrenness on the other, as any of a similar nature seen by the writer in Egypt. 137

The walking upon the sand, although tiresome, was easy as compared with that on the hummock grass, over which our route now lay. In our journeyings theretofore, although there was no regular paths and of course no roads, we were fortunate enough occasionally to strike a sheep or cattle trail, which afforded a welcome relief, however brief, to our jaded feet. There was nothing of the sort now—no avoiding of rough places, no choice of spots to plant a foot—and as we moved grimly onward, blundering at every step, the distance around Cape Anaatanvanui seemed interminable. Thoroughly fatigued we reached the precipice, which terminated the plateau over which we had been struggling, and looking to the westward saw the welcome flags, still a mile distant, waving over our camp. The descent of the precipice at the point reached being precarious, its edge was skirted until a more favorable place was found down which to scramble to the plain below. Here we presently struck a trail, which soon opened into a wagon road, whence a footpath led to the camp, which the writer (the party having been scattered since noon) reached at 4.30 in the afternoon. 487

The situation of the camp, which was named "Baird" in honor of the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, was a delightful one, being located on the south side of the little bay of Hanga Nui, at the base of a bluff which partly sheltered it from the strong southeast trades, as well as the hot afternoon sun. Rana Roraka, from the crater and slopes of which all the monoliths on the island had been quarried, lay immediately to the left. Pua-ko-taki, over whose summit and around whose base we had toiled, loomed in front of us. Lying in the opening of our cave, we could gaze upon the great platform, Tongariki, with its fifteen prostrate stone images, the largest and most imposing on the island. At our feet, surging back and forth among the everlasting rocks as the swell rolled in from the open ocean, lay the sparkling waters of the Hanga Nui Bay. 122 ●

The cave, called "Ana Haven" by the natives, ran back into the bluff a distance of 50 feet or more and laterally about 30. The entrance was spacious, and it was roomy, dry, and well ventilated, the trade wind, deflected by the bluff, sweeping nearly across its face. It was an ancient cavern, had been inhabited by the image builders, and was still occupied at times by the natives, as also by Messrs. Salmon and Brander when in this part of the island, engaged in rounding up their herds of cattle or sheep. The floor was strewn with dry litter, bull rushes and 342

10: Cooke D-5 (1886) 1899
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

to whose ancestors it relates and who seemed to be doomed to speedy extinction.

During our stay at the island we were treated with every courtesy by Mr. Salmon, who placed every facility within his power at our disposal for the prosecution of our work, and I am indebted to him for much of the information embodied in this report.

Wednesday, December 29, was devoted to explorations in the vicinity of Vaihu, to the collection of data, and taking of notes, and at 7 o'clock in the evening drove to Mr. Brander's house, near the village of Mataveri, having thus completed the tour of the coast line of the island. That evening, in company with Mr. Salmon, a visit was made to Chief Ure Vaeiko, 83 years old, for the purpose of having him interpret the hieroglyphic writings on the wooden tablets and photographs. This he did into the Rapa Nui language, the interpretation being taken down by Mr. Salmon, stretched at full length in the litter constituting the floor of the house, and subsequently translated into English by him. The latter, with the paymaster, was engaged with this work through the entire night, and at 10 o'clock next morning, the 30th, met the writer at Mr. Brander's house. A large portion of this day was devoted to visiting the villages, inspecting the houses, and making physical examinations. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon we returned to the house of Mr. Salmon, at Vaihu, where a note from the ship was received urging our immediate return, as the image had been received on board and the *Mohican* was to sail on the following day.

Another night was passed at the house of Mr. Salmon, and at 7 o'clock on the morning of December 31, our preparations being completed, we started on our return. The "buggy" was again brought into requisition and carried us as far as Rana Roraku, the road terminating at the corral at its base. Here we alighted, and the natives distributing and shouldering our implements, all hands except Mr. Salmon, who rode on horseback, struck out to cross the island on foot to La Perouse Bay. The distance was about 3 miles by the trail, which was rough and rocky but quite level, and was accomplished in an hour. On the way we passed our camp of December 23 and 24, "Whitney," where a party of native men and women had spent the preceding, and it is to be hoped a drier, night than we did under the overhanging rock.

We arrived at the landing in Hanga-one Bay, whence the image had been bonted off to the ship after having been brought a distance of 2½ miles overland on a sled, at about 9 o'clock in the morning, and in a little while thereafter returned on board after an absence from the ship of twelve days. At 3 o'clock the same afternoon, all financial matters having been concluded, and a number of sheep, the parting gifts of Messrs. Salmon and Brander, having been received on board, we bade farewell to our gentle Rapa Nui friends and steamed away for Valparaiso.

We found the natives who accompanied us bright, willing, tractable,

14: Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1917
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

Some Six
years ago the authorities of the British Museum suggested to us that, if we wished for anthropological work in the Pacific, Easter Island offered the most promising field of research. The difficulties were obvious, the greatest being that of reaching the island, but we finally decided on the venture. We were fortunate in obtaining the sanction and support of the Government of Chile, to which country the island belongs, and also that of Messrs. Williamson and Balfour, who have a pecuniary interest in it. The little schooner yacht *Mana* was built for the purpose, and she sailed from Southampton on 28 February 1913 bound for Easter Island. The *Mana* is 126 tons Thames measurement, or 91 tons gross. She is 90 feet over all, and her beam is 20 feet. She has an auxiliary motor engine. Her navigating officers were Lieut. R. D. Ritchie, R.N., kindly lent by the Admiralty for navigation and survey, and later her sailing master, Mr. H. J. Gillam (now Lieut. R.N.). We were detained three weeks at Falmouth waiting for a favourable wind, and then proceeded by Madeira and Las Palmas to the Cape Verde Islands. Thence we crossed the Atlantic to Pernambuco, having a favourable passage of the Doldrums, and went on our way down the coast of South America. We anchored six times between Pernambuco and the Straits of Magellan, not only at the large ports of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires, but also in out-of-the-way sandy coves and rugged inlets, continually finding ourselves on the track of Drake, Anson, and other historic seamen. The exigencies of wind and weather and the necessities of food and water remain always the same for sailing ships, and we looked at a seafaring life from the point of view of the early navigators, which is an aspect very different from that seen from the deck of a mail steamer. At Punta Arenas in the Straits of Magellan we were detained six weeks by essential work on the motor engine, and it was fortunate that the alterations proved successful, as for the passage of the Straits we were obliged to rely entirely upon mechanical power.

The south-western extremity of South America can best be pictured by imagining the aspect of Switzerland if the ocean could be let into its lakes and valleys. Comparatively narrow channels lie between sheer precipices of rock, whose summits abound with glaciers whilst the peaks above are wreathed in perpetual snow. The lower slopes of these mountains are covered with a mass of tangled vegetation and flowering shrubs which, where the gradient permits, grow down to and overhang the water's edge. For such craft as ours it is only possible to navigate these waters by daylight, and owing to the great depth of the channels and to the incompleteness of the charting the possible anchorages are few. Hence traversing these waterways recalls games played in early youth; if the right number is not thrown, in other words if it is not possible to reach the desired anchorage before dark, the voyager must return to his last resting-place. On the other hand it may with good luck be possible to surpass the original estimate, skip one or two stopping-places, and reach a yet further anchorage. It is eminently desirable to have the greatest possible amount